Cookies

Those familiar with Frog and Toad may be familiar with this story. Frog comes up with various ways to prevent them from eating cookies, and Toad keeps pointing out that they can just circumvent these restrictions. In fact, you can't create a system that constrains itself. It is not possible to both have access to cookies and deny access to those cookies. Except Frog and Toad are world leaders, and the cookies are authoritarian powers.

Every constitution in the world, every "separation of powers" and set of "checks and balances" attempts to do something which is categorically impossible. Every government is always, at best, a few steps away from authoritarianism. From this, we would then expect that governments trend towards authoritarianism. Which, of course, is what we see historically.

Constraints on power are a formality, because no real controls can possibly exist. So then democratic processes become sort of collective classifiers that try to select only people who won't plunge the country into a dictatorship. Again, because this claim of restrictions on powers is a lie (willful or ignorant, a lie regardless) that classifier has to be correct 100% of the time (even assuming a best case scenario). That's statistically unlikely, to say the least.

The state has become an existential threat to humanity in multiple ways. Not only are we **all** at risk of being killed at any time by nuclear hellfire, but we are also slowly being killed by climate change. States won't fix this. Nuclear weapons are extremely profitable. The ecocide must continue in order to sustain the global order.

Every election is a dice roll. Every state is gambling with the lives of it's citizens, waiting for the luck to run out. And the worst people possible are there, waiting for their chance to win. In the US, The ICE ethnic cleansing is largely about reversing "demographic shifts" that will make electing a Republican impossible in the future. By carrying out a genocide, they hope to recover their electability. Genocide is inseparable from the modern state.

We will continue to enact unspeakable horrors on ourselves and the planet until these systems eventually collapse under their own incompetence or annihilate all life on Earth. That is, unless we can find another way to organize ourselves as humans.

Fortunately, there is an alternative. The alternative is to not centralize power. In the security world we try to design systems that assume compromise and minimize impact, rather than just assuming that we will be right 100% of the time. If you build systems that maximally distribute power, then you minimize the impact of one horrible person.

The world is a disaster and we need an escape.

Exit: Fractal Anarchism

We need to build dual power, to create our alternative system right now. We need to build somethingprefigurative, because **how** we build the future cannot be separated from **what** that future looks like.

But there's good news. Any sufficiently advanced disaster preparedness is indistinguishable from revolutionary dual power. "A disaster" is simply systemic collapse, and "disaster preparedness" is the process of making systems situationally optional. Good disaster preparedness means working with your community, building systems collaboratively, and figuring out how to work together outside of the system. That's just prefigurative by definition.

But what if we went further? What if we extend the concept of a disaster? What if that system wasn't just focused on pandemics, hurricanes, fires, and earthquakes? Imagine it also considered other disasters, like the current crisis of mass displacement created by (among other things) a capitalist housing market. Imagine a disaster preparedness system so comprehensive that it included the personal crises (thereby eliminating the need for the entire insurance industry) and global crises (that states have failed to address for longer than most folks reading this have been alive) like climate change.

Think of what follows as a starting point, a seed, not as a roadmap to be followed dogmatically.

What do we need to replace?

The liberal democratic governments and capitalism fulfill needs along the following four pillars:

- **consumable goods**
- **durable goods**
- **infrastructure**
- **services**

Any viable alternative to the dominant system must fulfill at least these same needs as are currently fulfilled by the state. As the state withers and capitalism collapses, it will become easier to fulfill these needs. In order to do so, Fractal Anarchism proposes a strategy of fulfilling needs via bottom-up recursive institutions.

Each level of the social entity should establish (formally or informally) a set of institutional systems to address these needs. These systems are…

- **the dispensary** to provide consumable goods,
- **the library**, to provide access to shared durable goods,
- **the works committee**, to build, (own,) and maintain infrastructure such as housing, and
- **the services committee**, to identify and provide services, such as child care, for its members.

Individuals

The individual is the smallest unit we will focus on. Individuals are responsible for personal disaster preparedness and supporting collective preparedness via affinity groups. Personal preparedness depends on the disaster situation, but, at a minimum, must cover water, food, shelter/heat, sanitation, and entertainment for at least 72 hours.

Individuals should have at least two ways to achieve any objective. There should, for example, be twice as much water as the minimum needed for any individual. Taking care of additional supplies rapidly become easier as group size grows. One person needs twice the supply of water and food, but 3 people can safely only need supplies for 4 people, and 5 only really needs supplies for 7 to be comfortable. A single pack of playing cards or some dice can easily provide entertainment and distraction for a group when conversation might run out.

Supplies all fall in to the category of a dispensary (or pantry) at the individual level. Libraries and other committees don't exist at this level.

The Affinity Group

An affinity group[1] is a group of roughly 3-5 people, but no more than 10. It is small enough that every member knows each other so intimately that they can predict, at a basic level, what decisions others might make in a situation. It is small enough to allow pure consensus democracy. Any group that grows too large should split in to two groups and federate (described in the following section).

At this level, a dispensary will focus on making sure each member has sufficient consumable supplies as well as extra. It will make sure supplies are distributed at different locations to make sure a disaster in one area doesn't destroy all supplies. The affinity group library will track survival tool locations and similarly make sure caches are distributed.

At this level, it also becomes possible to directly address some of the immediate challenges of capitalism. The same library affinity group library can facilitate tool sharing. A works committee could collaborate to purchase and maintain technical infrastructure such as file shares and mastodon instances. An affinity group could buy and own vehicles (such as cars or e-bikes), vehicle repair facilities, land, or housing.

At this level, a services committee could organize foraging to fulfill basic needs such food and soap. It could organize guerilla gardening or support gardening to fill shared pantries. It could organize community dinners.

An affinity group must work together to identify it's internal agreements and codify them for future reference.

Clusters and Federations

A federation (or "cluster") is roughly an affinity group of affinity groups. Federations are also recursive, so they can also be federations of federations, or federations of federated federations, etc, to any level. Just as every affinity group needs to figure out how they work together, so does every federation.

Federations are generally expected to coordinate via "spokes councils." A spokes council is a meeting where appointed representatives speak on behalf of their entities (affinity groups or federations).

As federations grow, more things become possible. An affinity group in the US may be able to reduce costs by getting a shared Costco card or shopping together at a restaurant supply store. A federation of affinity groups may be able start an informal coop. A federation of such federations may be able open a storefront for a coop.

[1] 10

- `https://cdn.crimethinc.com/pdfs/affinity-groups.pdf`
- Crimethinc.com: How to Form an Affinity Group

Frog put the cookies in a box.

"There," he said.

"Now we will not eat any more cookies."

"But we can open the box," said Toad.

"That is true," said Frog.

- Frog and Toad Together

Exit Dystopia

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